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ISSUE 14

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inside

gamecenter

the games

to play

**BATMAN:
ARKHAM ORIGINS** 14

POKEMON X AND Y 16

WWE 2K14 18

**SKYLANDERS:
SWAP FORCE** 20

**SCRIBBLENAUTS
UNMASKED** 22

previews

**LEGO MARVEL
SUPER HEROES** 38

NBA 2K 14 40

SONIC: LOST WORLD 41

reviews

WONDERFUL 101 45

NHL 14 45

DIABLO III 45

preview

ASSASSIN'S CREED IV: BLACK FLAG

Assassin's Creed IV transports players to the South Seas to live the life of a pirate. Sail, fight, and search for treasure in Ubisoft's latest adventure.

36

This is the legend you've heard
whispered through the ages



THE LEGEND OF
ZELDA
the Windwaker
HD

inside gamecenter™

editorial

08

game on

10

5 to play

14

10 secrets

26

strategy
center

46

parting
shots

50


cover story

BATTLEFIELD 4

One of the most celebrated military combat games makes its return this fall on both current and next-gen systems. Get ready with this immersive inside look.

28



 legend as sweeping as the sea



welcome

FROM THE PUBLISHER



It seems that most big game releases are sequels. This season alone we have *Battlefield 4*, *Call of Duty: Ghosts*, *Assassin's Creed IV*, *Need for Speed Rivals*, *Forza 5*, *Gran Turismo 6*, *Super Mario 3D World*, new installments to all of the big sports franchises, and on and on ...

Because of this, some critics proclaim there is nothing original left, that developers are only interested in mining the familiar (and profitable) over creating new art.

To them I say, balderdash!

It's true that continuing franchises are the backbone of gaming, providing the industry with games that sell a ton of copies. But these critics don't seem to ask why these sell so well.

By and large the series that cash in do so because they are really good. Somehow, the two studios behind the *Call of Duty* series keep managing to add new features to each subsequent game, polishing an already highly-polished formula. Each installment freshens the series up a little, keeping fans happy for another year.

And then there is the example of *Assassin's Creed*. Each numbered installment has introduced a new time period, new settings, characters, and play mechanics. Yes, the series Assassins versus Templars storyline carries over from one to the next, as has the

main character who resides in the modern day and travels into the personae of his Assassin ancestors (at least until now).

Familiarity instilled with variances is a winning formula for giving fans something new and something that they want at the same time.

That's not to say new series are a bad thing either. Upcoming games like *Knack*, *Watch_Dogs*, *Titanfall*, and *The Order: 1886* are coming to satisfy those looking for something completely different. Make no mistake though, if these games are successful they will be the start of new series, and five years from now we'll be seeing *Watch_Dogs 3*.

The best part about video game sequels, unlike their counterparts in the movie industry, more often than not they are better than the original. Game engines get refined, graphics improve, and ideas that didn't make the cut originally come to fruition.

So my advice to gamers is this: If the game is good, enjoy it! Don't worry about whether or not it's a sequel, and original game, or even a remake. And keep reading Walmart GameCenter magazine to find out which ones are worth your time.

STEVE HARRIS
PUBLISHER

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Gamecenter™



 legend born from battle



GAME ON!

GAMING NEWS, NUMBERS, AND GOSSIP

EDITED BY ERIC L. PATTERSON

YOU CAN TAKE IT WITH YOU

NEXT-GENERATION

Come November, gamers around the world will be overflowing with joy as they bring home the brand-new console offerings from Sony and Microsoft. Some of you, however, won't be looking to make the jump to the PlayStation 4 or Xbox One just yet—and a number of companies are hoping to make things easier for you when you do.

Microsoft has announced that they'll be working with select publishers to ensure that season passes purchased for the Xbox 360 version of a game will transfer over to the Xbox One iteration. With season passes, players can pay a reduced rate to receive numerous DLC releases that have been developed for their favorite title, and thanks to these efforts by Microsoft, you'll be able to re-download that content once you pick up an Xbox One for no additional fee.

Of course, even before worrying about additional content for the hottest upcoming titles, what about the games themselves? If you purchase a particular release for the Xbox 360 or the PS3 while saving up for a new console, won't all of your hard work and effort be gone if you then want to upgrade to the next-gen version of the game?

Thankfully, the answer is no when it comes to some of this fall's most anticipated titles. Activision has announced that for those players eager to jump into the next major release of the *Call of Duty*,



player stats and individual profiles for *Call of Duty: Ghosts* will transfer seamlessly across the Xbox 360 and Xbox One, or PlayStation 3 and PlayStation 4. Given all of the hard work being put into *Ghosts*' new custom soldier system, it's definitely reassuring to know they'll be able to join you when you make the move to the upcoming generation of hardware.

Call of Duty won't be the only game to help players make the switch. Not wanting to be shown up by their rival in the first-person-shooter genre, EA and DICE announced similar plans for the upcoming *Battlefield 4*. Start your adventure in DICE's next outing on your current system, and when you've decided to upgrade, your stats, unlocks, ranks, awards, and assignments will be ready and waiting for you.

So, fear not—you won't be left behind if you aren't ready to enter the brave new world of the Xbox One and PlayStation 4 just yet. For now, just pick up those games you've been anticipating for your current systems and make the jump when you're ready.

**PLAYER STATS AND INDIVIDUAL PROFILES
FOR CALL OF DUTY: GHOSTS WILL TRANSFER
SEAMLESSLY ACROSS THE XBOX 360 AND XBOX
ONE, OR PLAYSTATION 3 AND PLAYSTATION 4**

BY THE NUMBERS

700 Missions available in *Grand Theft Auto Online*, *GTAV's* online mode

3,000,000+ People who signed up to try the *Elder Scrolls Online* beta

20,000 Customization options available in *Call of Duty: Ghosts* for your personal soldier

3 GB Cloud storage you'll get on your PlayStation 4 via PlayStation Plus

\$0 Price for *Killzone: Shadow Fall's* upcoming additional DLC maps

Long Live the Legend

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on the uncharted Great Sea



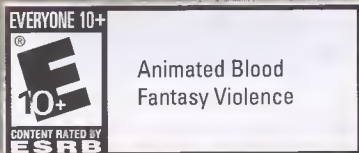
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Gold Pack

AVAILABLE **10/4**



*Usable internal memory limited due to system software. www.zelda.com/windwaker

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NINTENDO UNVEILS THE NINTENDO 2DS

If you've had your eye on all of the great games out there for the 3DS, but the system's price was a little out of your reach, then Nintendo's got the perfect solution for you. The company has revealed the Nintendo 2DS, a new take on their current line of handheld gaming systems that lets consumers experience the wide array of 3DS offerings for a suggested retail price of \$129.99. While the 2DS can do almost everything the 3DS and 3DS XL can do—play cartridge-based 3DS titles, download the large catalog of Nintendo eShop games and apps, backward compatibility with the library of more than 2,000 existing DS releases—it's missing one major feature: the ability to play games in 3D. If the lack of one dimension isn't a big deal for you, then you'll be able to pick up a Nintendo 2DS in either Red or Blue come October 12th.



PERSONALIZE YOUR PLAYSTATION 4

Color choices for our videogame hardware aren't just a way for Microsoft, Sony, and Nintendo to give their systems or peripherals a fresh feeling—they're also a way for us, as players, to express our personalities. One way to make a statement is by picking the perfect color of controller, and Sony will be providing a few options for doing just that when they release both "Wave Blue" and "Magma Red" variations of the PS4's DualShock 4. These two additional colors will join the standard "Jet Black" option shortly after the system's November 15th debut, with a suggested retail price of \$59.

GET IN THE GAME EARLY

As games get more complex and developers strive to be more ambitious with their projects, giving players a chance to preview what's being worked on early via a beta test is becoming more and more important. This can help ensure that online multiplayer will be as smooth as possible, both in terms of game balance and server strength—and that's part of the reason that EA and DICE will be running a beta for *Battlefield 4* starting in October. *Battlefield 3: Premium* members



on the Xbox 360, PS3, and PC will get free access to the beta, which will feature Conquest mode on the Siege of Shanghai map. Another highly anticipated title will also be launching a beta in October, as PS3 owners will get to try out Namco Bandai's *Dark Souls II*.

Even the next-gen consoles are already getting in on the beta bandwagon, with Lionhead revealing that they'll be launching a beta test for the Xbox One exclusive *Fable Legends* at some point next year. Beta tests aren't just a way for players to get a sneak peek at what they'll be playing in the upcoming months, they're also a way that all of us can help companies make their games as good as possible.

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PRE-ORDER CALENDAR

Get great extras by pre-ordering tomorrow's hits today!

OCTOBER

Batman: Arkham Origins 25

Includes Playable Deathstroke Character and Challenge Maps

Assassin's Creed IV 29

Includes the Walmart Exclusive Sacrificed Secrets Pack



Battlefield 4 29



Includes the Battlefield 4 China Rising Expansion Pack

NOVEMBER

PlayStation 4 15



EA'S MASTER PLAN, TITANFALL, MORE SONY EXCLUSIVES, AND GRAN TURISMO 7?

While the summer months are starting to fade away, your friendly neighborhood Quartermann has had to keep his AC runnin' full blast because of how hot the gaming rumors and gossip are! And what better way to kick things off than with EA's aggressive new approach to game releases? The colossal creator of fine gaming concoctions announced that they'll be building upon a rotating schedule of *Battlefield*, *Titanfall*, and *Star Wars: Battlefront* releases going forward, with each franchise getting its own year to shine. Looking at the handy-dandy *Far Side* calendar that's always sitting on my desk—those cows are so crazy!—that gives us *Battlefield 4* this year, *Titanfall* in 2014, and *Battlefront* for 2015 (in time for *Episode VII*), with the rotation back on *Battlefield* the year after. There's just one problem with that mathematical equation: One of those three major gaming pillars is an Xbox exclusive. Or is it? Given the information that's been slid my way in secretive back-alley meetings, I'm feeling that it's a safe bet to add the word "timed" to *Titanfall*'s designation of exclusivity. If EA's hoping to turn the game into a major new franchise, the best way to do so will be to get it to people on both sides of the fence...Even if Sony isn't able to announce *Titanfall* coming to their platform just yet, there was plenty of excitement to be found at their recent Gamescom press briefing, and the company came onto the stage swinging with price drops on the PlayStation 3 and PlayStation Vita, the announcement of full integrated live streaming support via Twitch for the PS4, and the utterly unexpected reveal of everyone's favorite sandbox simulation, *Minecraft*, coming to all three major PlayStation platforms. Ah, but unlike many

others, the Q-Mann picks up on the juicy details both big and small—such as when senior vice president of European studios Michael Denny noted that *all* 14 of Sony's worldwide studios are currently working hard on titles for the company's new hardware. Three of those developers with top-secret projects in the works are Sony Santa Monica, Media Molecule, and Naughty Dog, best known for *God of War*, *LittleBigPlanet*, and *Uncharted* respectively. One of the biggest surprises? Also on the list is Bend Studio, which hasn't been directly responsible for a console game *Syphon Filter: Logan's Shadow* on the PS2 back in 2007. Bend was most recently responsible for the Vita's two *Uncharted* titles—and while I'm not saying they'll be the

GAMING GOSSIP

ones responsible, I'm hearing whispers that a fourth major adventure for Monsieur Drake could be revealed at this year's Spike Video Game Awards... Many amateur automotive aficionados were really surprised to hear that *Gran Turismo 6* would be coming for the PS3 and not the PS4. You'll be pleased to hear Kazunori Yamauchi (head of the design team at Polyphony Digital) recently acknowledged that a PS4 version of *Gran Turismo* has been in the minds of the team—but that, by the time it comes out, it might be more akin to *Gran Turismo 7*. Not only because of the amount of time it'd take to fully put the project together, but because, as Yamauchi put it, the vision for *Gran Turismo*'s debut on the PS4 might not carry over from the work being put into *Gran Turismo 6*...

WALMART'S TOP SELLERS

This month's top-selling videogames...

MADDEN NFL 25 EA Sports - PS3 / X360	01
DISNEY INFINITY STARTER PACK Disney Interactive - 3DS / Wii / WiiU / PS3 / X360	02
SAINT'S ROW 4 Deep Silver - PS3 / X360	03
NCAA FOOTBALL 14 EA Sports - PS3 / X360	04
CALL OF DUTY: BLACK OPS 2 Activision - WiiU / PS3 / X360	05
TOM CLANCY'S SPLINTER CELL: BLACKLIST Ubisoft - WiiU / PS3 / X360	06
MARIO & LUIGI: DREAM TEAM Nintendo - 3DS	07
THE LAST OF US SCEA - PS3	08
ELDER SCROLLS V: SKYRIM Bethesda Soft - S3 / X360	09
PIKMIN 3 Nintendo - Wii U	10

Killzone: Shadow Fall

15

Knack

15

Drive Club

15

Need for Speed: Rivals

19

Includes the Nissan GT-R Black Edition Cop Car

South Park: Stick of Truth

19

Includes Good Times Weapons and Mystery Superheroes Packs



Xbox One

22



Forza 5

22

Ryse: Son of Rome

22

Dead Rising 3

22

Day One Edition includes Special Box and In-Game Content Exclusive to this Edition

1

BATMAN: ARKHAM ORIGINS

PUBLISHER WARNER BROS. INTERACTIVE ENTERTAINMENT

DEVELOPER WARNER BROS. GAMES MONTREAL

PLATFORMS 360 / PS3 / WII U / PC

25

OCT


"We like the world where people don't know about Batman. Where he's still an urban legend, a myth, a creature of the night. Something to be feared. And the few thugs who have encountered him don't want to talk about him. They're scared that if they even mention that he exists, people won't listen to them. There's still an aura of mystery that surrounds him, and in our game, he's still trying to learn how to take advantage of that. There's one point where Batman's choking a thug to get information—he squeezes too tight and the thug passes out. So, our Batman is early enough in his career to be making mistakes, but because he's Batman, he makes *awesome* mistakes. He's not going to trip over his cape. He chokes someone out so hard, they pass out—and to get the information he needs, he then has to hang them upside down, drop them off a clock tower, and hope the shock snaps them back to reality."

—BEN MATTES, SENIOR PRODUCER, WARNER BROS. GAMES MONTREAL


5 to PLAY

NEW GAMES YOU DON'T WANT TO MISS

BY PAUL SEMEL



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Deathstroke playable character DLC,
while supplies last!



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5 to PLAY

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2

POKÉMON X AND Y

PUBLISHER NINTENDO
DEVELOPER GAME FREAK
PLATFORM 3DS

12
OCT

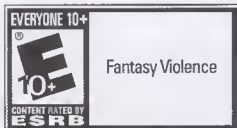
"I think you're going to see that the feeling of the music is going to be quite different in *Pokémon X and Y*. This time around, we created enough original music that could fill up three CDs—and it's not going to have any modifications or synthesizing. The music that we created will finally be heard as we intended. If you look at the games as a whole, among the sound team, they really decide what the specific music is going to be like in a town or on the roads, for example. In the battles, to really pump them up, there's a techno sound, whereas in other places, we have orchestral sounds. We look at it as a whole, but this time, we'll have a larger variety. It's like a rock album, but with a lot of ballads on it as well. That's part of the idea this time—to have a larger variety."

—JUNICHI MASUDA, GAME DIRECTOR, GAME FREAK



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3

WWE 2K14

PUBLISHER 2K SPORTS
DEVELOPER YUKE'S / VISUAL CONCEPTS
PLATFORMS 360 / PS3

29
OCT

"We've got 45 classic WrestleMania matches in the new "30 Years of WrestleMania" mode. You start with Hulk Hogan at the first WrestleMania in 1985, move through the '90s with Bret Hart, through the 2000s with Triple H, and into the modern era with John Cena. And as you play through, you'll unlock a ton of stuff—380 unlockables—this time around. But beyond all that, the roster's probably one of the coolest things about the game if you're a wrestling fan. You get to play as everyone from Hogan and Andre the Giant to "Stone Cold" Steve Austin and The Rock. Part of what makes the roster great, though, is that the guys who have more than one WrestleMania match featured in the game—like Shawn Michaels—will have multiple versions of themselves on the roster. They'll appear as they did in those matches, so you'll have an early-'90s, WrestleMania X Shawn as well as the more current WrestleMania XXVI Shawn."

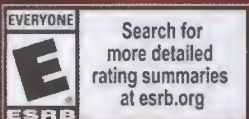
—BRYCE YANG, GLOBAL BRAND MANAGER, 2K SPORTS

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NBA 2K14



 XBOX 360

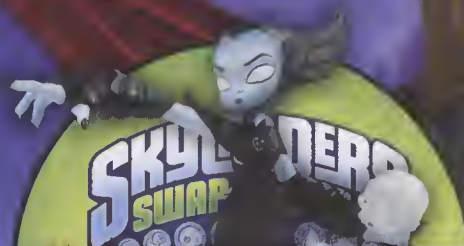
 PS3

 PC



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5 to PLAY



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4

SKYLANDERS: SWAP FORCE

PUBLISHER ACTIVISION

DEVELOPER VICARIOUS VISIONS / BEENOX / N-SPACE

PLATFORMS XBOX ONE / PS4 / 360 / PS3 / WII U / WII / 3DS

13

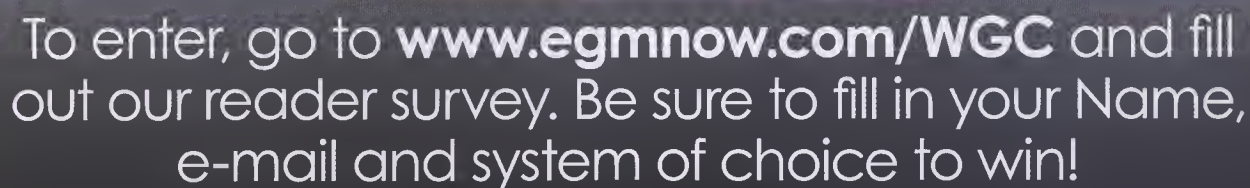
OCT

"*Skylanders: Swap Force* is bringing a ton of new features to the series that we're really excited about. But the one I'm most excited about is 'swapability,' the ability to physically mix and match the tops and bottoms of your Swap Force toys and see the changes reflected in-game. *Skylanders* allows players to choose what kind of hero they want to be. If you want to be a teleporting vampire boxer, you can be Night Shift. If you want to be a stealthy ninja skunk, you can be Stink Bomb. But now, with *Swap Force*, you can combine your toys and become Stink Shift, the teleporting ninja skunk, or Night Bomb, the stealthy vampire boxer—there are more than 250 combinations. We've seen character customization for years now in videogames, but being able to do it in the real world and see it come to life in the game is just magical."

—MICHAEL GRAHAM, DESIGN PRODUCER, ACTIVISION

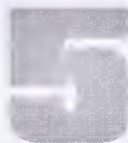


BATMAN
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PLATFORMS WII U / 3DS / PC

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— CALEB ARSENEAUX, SENIOR PRODUCER, 5TH CELL

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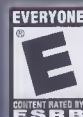
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10 secrets

OF SPLINTER CELL: BLACKLIST

BY PAUL SEMEL



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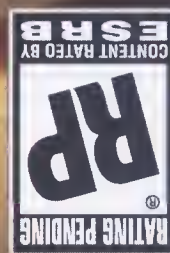
As with all of the *Splinter Cell* games, the newest, *Blacklist*, sees superspy Sam Fisher using guns, gadgets, and guile to be as sneaky as possible. Thankfully, we didn't have to use any of that to get art director Scott Lee and cinematics director David Footman from Ubisoft Toronto to reveal some of the cool secrets about the game—and the people who made it



ARCHITECTURAL DIGEST

In *Blacklist*, the Abandoned Mill level is set in a London factory. But while the building in the game is modeled after a real factory in the U.K.—the Millennium Mills—the one in the game is instead called Landsdowne Mill, named after a major street near Ubisoft Toronto's offices. So, what gives? "Y'know, Ubisoft's very careful when it comes to legalities," Lee admits. "But we also wanted to put a little bit of us into it."





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SL



MARVEL

UPER HEROES





games

02 PERFECT HAIR FOREVER

For the good people at Ubisoft Toronto, accurate design doesn't just apply to buildings—it also applies to hair. "While we were deciding how Sam would look in the game, creative director *Maxime Béland* happened to get a haircut," Lee recalls. "I realized it was the perfect hair for Sam. But because the back of Max's head wasn't hairy enough, we used the back of our environmental artist Denny Borges' head instead. He has a really manly hairline."



03 CHEAP LABOR

Like a lot of games, *Blacklist* has plenty of enemy fodder with which you'll interact. And by "interact," we mean "strangle from behind when they're not looking." Just don't strangle the real people if you ever want to play another *Splinter Cell*. "When we built the enemy characters," Lee explains, "we needed to scan people's faces. And since we have a lot of people on the team who look quite sinister, we scanned a few of them for the game. Seventy-seven, to be exact. You can even shoot me if you want!"



04 BOOSTER CLUB

While many of the NPCs in *Blacklist* look like the people who made the game, don't look for people like Lee by name. "Many of our NPCs," Lee explains, "are actually named after players on the local baseball and hockey teams, the Toronto Blue Jays and the Toronto Maple Leafs."

05 FOOTIE FANATICS

Speaking of sports, if you listen carefully to what some of the enemy NPCs say when you're not strangling them from behind, you'll realize they're all talking about the same soccer match. "And what's funny," Lee notes, "is that while this makes sense when you go on a mission to London, when you get to a part where your enemies are American soldiers, you'll hear them say things like, 'Why are you watching soccer?'"

06 PENMANSHIP

Screenwriter Aaron Sorkin has received plenty of acclaim for writing such movies and TV shows as *The Social Network* and *Sports Night*. Now he can add "Influencing the cutscenes in *Splinter Cell: Blacklist*" to his list of accomplishments. "The cinematics were really inspired by Sorkin," Footman explains, "specifically, his recent work in *The Newsroom*. He's a master of creating tension and dynamic blocking with his actors, and that's something we borrowed from for many scenes in the game."

07 FALLOUT

One of the few complaints about the otherwise impressive *Blacklist* is that, unlike every other *Splinter Cell* game, it doesn't feature actor Michael Ironside as the voice of Sam Fisher. Instead, Sam's voiced by Eric Johnson, who played a young Brad Pitt in *Legends of the Fall*. But you won't hear a certain segment of Ubisoft Toronto's staff complaining. "When Eric came to the studio to have some pictures taken of him in Sam's uniform," Lee remembers, "there were—honestly—women who work here, programmers, who were squealing about how excited they were to get their picture taken with him."



08 STRANGLE HOLD

To help with *Blacklist*, Ubisoft Toronto hired a combat consultant named Kevin Secours. But maybe they should've hired a combat consultant who's worked on a game before, since while doing motion-capture work, Secours would hit people full-on. But karma, it seems, is not without a sense of irony. "During a press tour," Lee recalls, "Secours had a woman choke him to show that the technique actually worked. But when he passed out, she didn't know what to do, so she kept holding him in the chokehold until Eric Johnson stopped her and revived him."



09 PACKIN' HEAT IN THE GREAT WHITE NORTH

On their first day, people hired by Ubisoft Toronto are handed a welcome packet, an Ubisoft mug, and, oddly, a Nerf gun. "The one we give out is the six-shooter version with the revolving cylinder," Lee notes. "Though a lot of people will go out and buy better ones, like the Nerf shotguns, while others will upgrade their Nerf guns. There are places online where you can learn how to make your Nerf gun super-strong. A couple of our guys did it, and their guns shoot Nerf ammo four times further."

10 HONEY BADGER DON'T CARE

But his lawyer might when he learns that the gun company Advanced Armament Corporation has an assault rifle called the AAC Honey Badger PDW—especially since it's one of the more than 30 real guns featured in *Blacklist*. "And we got it before *Call of Duty*," Lee chuckles gleefully. But Honey Badger's lawyer ain't laughing.

COVER STORY

BATTLEFIELD 4

BE ALL YOU CAN BE

BY CHRIS HOLZWORTH



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PUBLISHER ELECTRONIC ARTS

29

DEVELOPER OICE

PLATFORMS 360 / PS3 / PC / XBOX ONE (NOV) / PS4 (NOV)

OCT





Battlefield 4—heck, the entire franchise—doesn't really require an introduction. Even the most casual gamers have some vague understanding of *Battlefield* and the mark it's left on first-person shooters. Chances are, their understanding revolves around its exaggerated competition with Activision's *Call of Duty*. Like that series, *Battlefield*'s origins trace back to the height of PC gaming, when multiplayer shooters were, largely, still defined by the PC scene. *Battlefield* debuted when console games began bridging that divide, however, and developer DICE has since strived to accomplish the opposite of most console-based shooters: Grow the game into its own as a single-player experience while still delivering robust, engaging multiplayer.

Battlefield 3's single-player story was, admittedly, a bit of a mess as far as narrative and pacing were concerned, so EA and DICE are putting greater attention and focus in making *Battlefield 4*'s solo campaign a more memorable one. "We listen to both internal and external feedback, especially from the fans, and this helped shape what we're doing with *Battlefield 4*," says executive producer Patrick Bach. "For example, we have Michael K. Williams from hit shows like *The Wire* and *Boardwalk Empire* playing Irish, who is in your squad. Creating this deeper connection to the characters will in turn create a believable story that we hope players will connect to."

Expectedly, the finer details remain under wraps, but DICE has offered a glimpse at the primary protagonists who form Tombstone squad—comprised of Sgt. Daniel Recker, the main character, as well as Kimble "Irish" Graves and Clayton "Pac" Pakowski—and provided a brief overview of the journey they'll undertake.

Starting in Baku, Azerbaijan, Tombstone squad is tasked with recovering intelligence from a defecting Russian general. Escaping from Baku involves surviving the pursuit of Russian soldiers, after which Tombstone squad reaches an aircraft carrier nested in international waters. From there, Recker makes his way to Shanghai in order to extract a group of

CALLING THE SHOTS



New to the console-based *Battlefield* experience—but returning from previous PC entries *Battlefield 2* and *Battlefield 2142*—is Commander mode. One player from each side assumes the role of commander, removing themselves from immediate combat to observe and influence multiplayer matches from an aerial view of the entire map. Commanders have three primary abilities: to gather intel and prevent the enemy commander from doing the same, to provide vehicle and supply drops to their soldiers, and to take the offensive through gunship and missile strikes.

Commanders don't have infinite supplies of these resources, of course. Access depends on the progress of their in-battle teammates, who need to be playing their part in the theater of war in order to fully reap the benefits of their commander. It's a push-pull relationship, for sure, and it's an interesting dynamic to add back into *Battlefield*'s multiplayer, which has always set itself apart by focusing on large-scale war simulation with huge player counts, independent squads, and appropriately massive maps to host these skirmishes. The return of Commander mode complements this by adding a tactical element to a competitive multiplayer that already calls for considerable coordination and teamwork over rogue, lone-wolf cowboy antics.

"WE LISTEN TO BOTH INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL FEEDBACK, ESPECIALLY FROM THE FANS, AND THIS HELPED SHAPE WHAT WE'RE DOING WITH *BATTLEFIELD 4*"

EXECUTIVE PRODUCER PATRICK BACH



VIPs, among them a CIA operative. Tombstone squad's struggle to avoid catastrophic geopolitical fallout eventually takes them to Singapore, where—according to DICE—“nothing is certain.”

Of course, for all the effort the developers are putting into *Battlefield 4*'s single-player campaign, they aren't in any way neglecting the multiplayer component—something they fully understand is the real selling point for

many of their fans. *Battlefield* has always been about team dynamics. It's something the series hasn't been able to accomplish as effectively on consoles as it has on PC, but now, thanks to next-gen hardware, DICE can finally make those experiences indistinguishable.

EA and DICE have spared no expense to make the fourth proper installment of their flagship first-person shooter franchise the most appealing yet, demonstrating—live at



**BATTLEFIELD HAS ALWAYS BEEN
ABOUT TEAM DYNAMICS**

GRADUATING CLASS

Part of the team dynamic in *Battlefield 4*'s multiplayer means playing to the strengths of the game's four core classes: Support, Engineer, Recon, and Assault.

 SUPPORT

 ENGINEER

 RECON

 ASSAULT



SUPPORT

The Support class plays a defensive role during *Battlefield 4* multiplayer skirmishes. An ammunition box—allocated to one of the gadget slots—helps keep teammates equipped, while the light machine gun—the Support player's weapon of choice—is used for suppressing fire.

ENGINEER

As the name implies, Engineers are the best friends and worst enemies of vehicles in *Battlefield 4*—depending upon whose side they belong to. Engineers can repair friendly vehicles, but are also equipped with rocket-propelled grenade launchers and anti-tank weaponry to tear through enemy armor.

RECON

As far as *Battlefield* is concerned, Recon is synonymous with Sniper. These are the characters who lie prone, crawl through the grass, scout ahead, and pick off enemies from a distance. In *Battlefield 4*, the Recon class will once more have access to C-4 and throwable motion sensors.

ASSAULT

The Assault class is a combination of blunt instrument and medic. In this incarnation, Assault players can still equip med kits and defibrillators, but they can also choose to use first-aid packs to heal a single soldier over time or arm themselves with 40mm flashbang rounds to stun enemies when directly attacking.


E3 2013—how the multiplayer on next-gen consoles will finally match the PC experience in terms of size and scale. For the first time on consoles, *Battlefield*'s multiplayer will host up to 64 players for full-blown 32-against-32 matches—as compared to *Battlefield 3*'s (and current-gen versions of *Battlefield 4*'s) 24-player cap. Squads will now consist of five teammates made up of any combination of the four available classes: Support, Engineer, Recon, and Assault.

"Based off feedback we've received from our fans, we've done a lot of work to a number of things in multiplayer, including the classes and loadouts," says Bach. "We've tweaked them to be more versatile and more highly

specialized within their fields. For example, this time around, the Engineer has a lot more variation in anti-vehicle weapons. We've also revamped the way we do vehicle disables and guided weapon systems to give the Engineer a broader set of tactics at his [or her] disposal."

There's one other noteworthy addition to *Battlefield*'s multiplayer that next-gen tech allows for. The Frostbite 3 engine means more environmental destructibility and detail, which has been introduced into multiplayer as something DICE calls "Levolution." A portmanteau of "level" and "evolution," Levolution describes when player-caused environmental destruction alters and reshapes the layout of a level. "We've created these dynamic environ-

ments that react to your every move," says Bach. "Some things are massive like reducing a skyscraper to rubble or flooding an entire level in real-time. Others are small but hugely impact the game like shooting fire extinguishers to distract enemies or cutting the power of a building to blind opponents."

What all of this means—multiplayer matches that can now be triple in size, maps that can be resculpted at any moment, and a more cohesive single-player experience—is that, despite *Battlefield*'s status as a core EA brand, it's still a labor of love for its developers. And with this console-spanning fourth installment, DICE is looking to deliver the best *Battlefield* yet. 

YOUR ENEMIES



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10.25.2013
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Station



Wii U

NINTENDO 3DS



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Assassin's Creed is a rare gaming franchise. While most big-name series concentrate on delivering more of the same—the same characters and the same settings with only a few incremental refinements to keep things fresh—Ubisoft's historical epics have opted for broad, sweeping changes. Each numbered entry brings a richly realized new locale set in a different era, complete with gameplay tweaks to complement the setting.

But where previous entries evolved slowly, *Assassin's Creed IV: Black Flag* makes a leap of epic proportions. First, longtime present-day hero Desmond Miles is out of the picture. In his place comes a nameless employee of Abstergo, controlled by the player from a first-person perspective to allow for greater player immersion. For mysterious reasons, this character uses the Animus technology to delve into the life of Edward Kenway, a cut-throat 18th-century pirate and grandfather to *ACIII*'s Connor.

As Edward, players will explore a swath of the Caribbean that includes the ports of

Kingston, Nassau, and Havana. In a marked departure for the series, that world will be far more open than previous installments. Rather than gating off sections of the map with artificial boundaries, the entire region will be accessible from the start ... but there's a catch: Certain areas will be guarded by powerful enemy ships. Running the blockade will be difficult unless you've purchased high-end upgrades for your own craft, the Jackdaw, adding light RPG elements to the game.

In fact, given that you'll spend nearly half of your time at sea, the Jackdaw is among the most crucial elements of *Assassin's Creed IV*. To help ensure the experience is a pleasant one, the developers have made improvements to the naval gameplay introduced in *ACIII*. These include deeper, more free-flowing ship-to-ship combat and a dynamic weather system. The most noticeable change, however, is the ability to transition seamlessly between commanding your ship and disembarking, whether to board an enemy vessel in the heat of battle, leap ashore, or go for a dip in the briny deep. **G**

ASSASSIN'S CREED IV: **BLACK FLAG**

SHIVER ME TIMBERS!

BY JOSH HARMON



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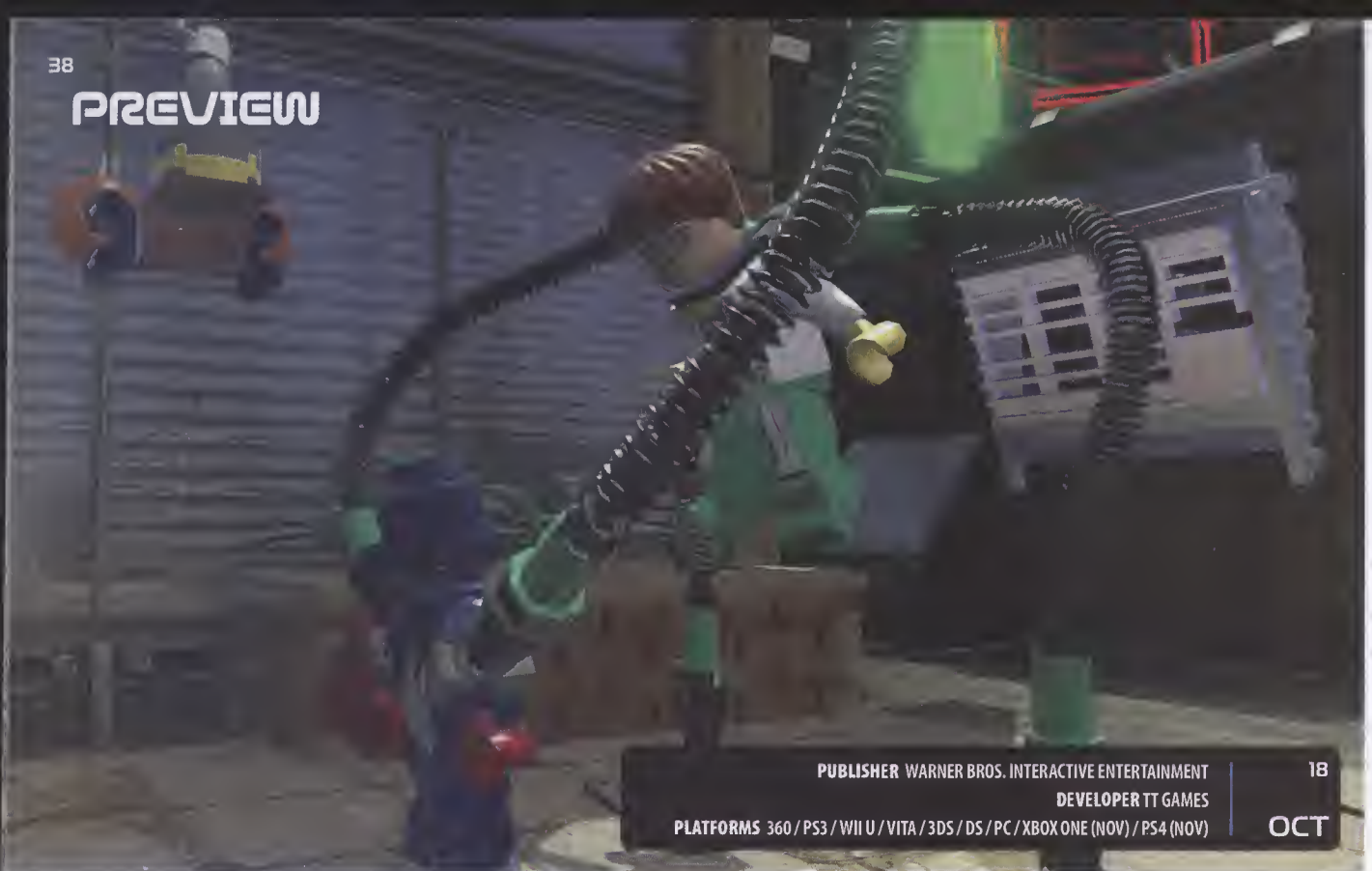


WHALE OF A TIME



The more open-world approach of *Assassin's Creed IV* means that the team at Ubisoft Montreal has placed a greater emphasis on side content than ever before. The most visually striking addition to the slate of diversions comes in the form of the harpooning minigame, where Edward takes to a whaleboat and teaches some of the sea's most majestic creatures what separates man from the animals. (Hint: It's pointy, pointy harpoons.) But fear not, landlubbers. You, too, will be able to claim your spot at the top of the food chain, as *Assassin's Creed III*'s hunting mechanics are back, allowing you to give the same treatment to any exotic land beasts you encounter. Of course, mastering the animal kingdom is just the beginning. Between missions, you'll also be able to search for buried treasure on remote Caribbean cays, dive beneath the waves to loot sunken shipwrecks, and carry out all manner of murderous deeds through optional assassination contracts.

EVEN IN A FRANCHISE WHERE CHANGE IS A CONSTANT, ASSASSIN'S CREED IV MIGHT REPRESENT THE LARGEST DEPARTURE YET



PUBLISHER WARNER BROS. INTERACTIVE ENTERTAINMENT

DEVELOPER TT GAMES

PLATFORMS 360 / PS3 / WII U / VITA / 3DS / DS / PC / XBOX ONE (NOV) / PS4 (NOV)

18

OCT

LEGO MARVEL SUPER HEROES

BY RAY CARSILO

SUPERPOWERS GONE WILD



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One of the most enjoyable aspects of the *LEGO* games is seeing how some of our favorite characters from pop culture—whether it's Harry Potter and friends or Batman and his rogues gallery—look and act in everyone's favorite blocky universe. But with *LEGO Marvel Super Heroes*, developer TT Games wanted to go a bit further. Not only will this be the largest roster in the series thus far, with nearly 150 characters, but each one will be unique.

"*Marvel Super Heroes* is a really great opportunity to just have as much variety as possible," explains assistant game director Stephen Sharples. "We've really gone all out to make every character unique; we're giving each of them unique moves and abilities in an effort to make them all feel different. Players used to criticize the *LEGO* series for the characters you unlocked and used in Free Play



ALL HAIL DOOM

Up until now, Galactus has been touted as the main bad guy in *LEGO Marvel Super Heroes*. And while stopping this notorious evildoer's quest to feed on the Earth is still our heroes' No. 1 priority, Doctor Doom isn't earning any super-heroic favors, either. In fact, his recently revealed involvement only causes the plot to thicken.

It turns out that Doom has kidnapped Galactus' herald, the cosmic-powered Silver Surfer, and shattered his surfboard apart into the Cosmic Cubes our heroes are desperately trying to collect. But Doom himself is also trying to snatch them up in the hope of harnessing Surfer's Power Cosmic and turning it back on Galactus.

But why is this all-time-great Marvel baddie suddenly doing something good for humankind? Because Doom figures if it's him—and him alone—who repels Galactus, the world will kneel before him and worship him as their savior, thus making Doom's own conquest of Earth complete.

not feeling that different from a lot of the main characters. This time, we've made sure that isn't the case."

Want some examples? The Human Torch can shoot a streaming jet of fire that can burn away Wolverine's body—causing the most famous member of the X-Men to playfully show off his famous adamantium skeleton before he's healed, no worse for wear. Meanwhile, Captain America can use his shield to hit special switches, the Hulk can use his strength to smash specific objects, and Spider-Man can use his webs to tie up everyone around him. The most intriguing character, though, might be Mr. Fantastic, who can contort his malleable body into a plethora of different items. Some might be for fun, like a teapot, while others help him advance through the level, like bolt cutters. Either way, no one else on the roster will play quite like him. ©



PUBLISHER 2K SPORTS

01

DEVELOPER VISUAL CONCEPTS

PLATFORMS 360 / PS3 / PC / XBOX ONE (NOV) / PS4 (NOV)

OCT

NBA 2K14

HOOP DREAMS

BY JASON FANELLI

Just like this year's cover star, LeBron James, 2K Sports has ruled over the world of digital basketball for years now—the last two going completely uncontested. However, it continues to update and innovate, and *NBA 2K14* looks to add depth and precision to an already strong name.

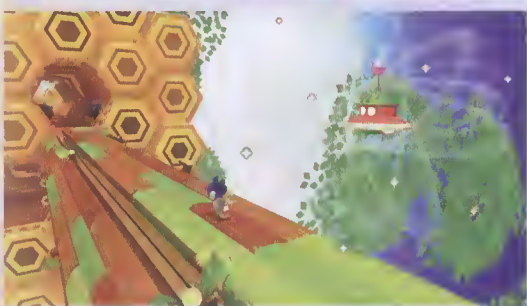
The new Pro Stick essentially controls an athlete's every move. Quick swipes from left to right will perform crossovers, a quick push initiates a dribble move, and holding the stick in allows for more precise shooting than ever. See a defender bearing down on the dribble? Pull up a quick shot right in his face. Want to put an opposing player in early foul trouble? Shield the ball on the way to the hoop and draw the foul. The new stick puts full control in the hands of the player, just as it should be.

Gone from the series since *NBA 2K12*, the fan-favorite Crew mode is returning in *2K14*. This multiplayer mode allows players to control an individual player instead of an entire team, allowing up to five friends to play together. Players can create their own unique Crew—complete with custom logo—and compete against the world via online leaderboards. This mode's been sorely missed in the last two installments, and *NBA 2K* veterans will be glad to have it back.

With *NBA Live* jumping back into onto the court this year, *2K14* must find a way continue the reign of excellence it's seen in the past few years. Right now, it looks better than ever. 🏀

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It wasn't so long ago that the biggest rivals in the battle for home-console supremacy were Nintendo and Sega. Times have changed, however, and now the blue hedgehog who once led the charge against the forces of Mario seems most at home on Nintendo's platforms.

In *Sonic Lost World*, Sega's legendary mascot is back to save his furry friends from the clutches of Dr. Eggman. For some parts of *Lost World*, those adventures will feel familiar, as the game takes on a 2D side-scrolling style reminiscent of classic *Sonic* titles. At other points, the challenges that Sonic must overcome will reach a whole new dimension—literally.

As players race across the new set of worlds built up around a group of villains known as the Deadly Six, the strange structures and topography of Lost Hex will rotate under Sonic's feet. The idea's similar to what Nintendo did in their *Mario Galaxy* games, just taken to the extremes for which the *Sonic* series is known.

Amazingly, the complexity and expansiveness of these 3D landscapes will be kept for the 3DS version of *Sonic Lost World*, marking the first time a *Sonic* title has been fully 3D-rendered on a handheld. So, no matter if you tag along on Sonic's latest adventures on the 3DS or Wii U, a brave new world for everyone's favorite videogame speed freak awaits. **G**



PUBLISHER SEGA
DEVELOPER SONIC TEAM, DIMPS
PLATFORMS WII U/3DS

22
OCT

SONIC

LOST WORLD

SPEED DEMON

BY ERIC L. PATTERSON

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The Wonderful 101

rating
70%

PUBLISHER NINTENDO
DEVELOPER PLATINUM GAMES
PLATFORM Wii U

15
SEP

After countless delays that pushed this “launch window” title well past the Wii U’s initial six months on store shelves, *The Wonderful 101* is finally upon us. But it seems that many of the technical issues that plagued the game’s development were never truly ironed out and the crisp, focused controls that could almost serve as a calling card for developer Platinum Games suffered as a result of it.

While *The Wonderful 101* is another game that can be played on your TV or the Wii U tablet, the controls only come close to working if you play on your TV and use the Wii U’s tablet screen to draw the necessary objects to proceed through the game’s surprisingly long levels. *The Wonderful 101* feels like it was designed to require pinpoint precision to succeed, with a heavy emphasis on the right joystick, but the Wii U tablet simply cannot provide what the game wants. You end up fighting with the controller more than the enemies on the screen. Couple this with an atrocious camera and the game’s technical shortcomings are nothing short of tragic.

The Wonderful 101 succeeds at some things, however. It’s quirky, charming plot of a ragtag group of would-be heroes who must stand up and unite (quite literally) to stop a monstrous race of invading aliens is almost universal in its appeal. The story also oozes the humor and personality we’ve come to expect from a Hideki Kamiya title and anyone who is a fan of *Okami* or *Viewtiful Joe* will likely not only recognize the art style, but appreciate its bombastic colors and amazing character design. In the end, *The Wonderful 101* feels like unrealized potential as the controls detract too much though from what should have been a must-have experience on the Wii U.



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NHL 14

rating
91%

GOLD

PUBLISHER EA SPORTS
DEVELOPER EA CANADA
PLATFORMS 360 / PS3

10

SEP



Some of *NHL 14*'s major improvements this year really just fix things that were broken with the past few years' versions of the game, like General Manager AI in Season and GM modes. But when you combine those fixes with the new deking system that only requires a single button press (instead of both joysticks and several buttons) and the improved fighting mechanics borrowed from the *Fight Night* franchise, it's far easier to immerse yourself in the game now than ever before. Online modes, Hockey Ultimate Team, and EASHL have special Club Season variations to them now modeled after soccer divisions, but still have the core gameplay we've come to know and love. And an



anniversary mode commemorating *NHL 94*, still considered by many to be the greatest hockey game of all-time, acts as the icing on the cake. *NHL 14* is simply a must have for every hockey aficionado out there.



Diablo III

rating
87%

SILVER

PUBLISHER ACTIVISION
DEVELOPER BLIZZARD
PLATFORMS 360 / PS3

03

SEP



When *Diablo III* was first released as a PC exclusive last year, it certainly had its fair share of problems. Many were upset that the game required a constant Internet connection to play, while others were furious that the in-game auction house allowed players to spend actual cash to purchase the best items in the game. With this new console port, Blizzard has removed both of those controversial features, and replaced them with tweaks that make the dungeon-crawling, demon-hunting, loot-hording experience faster and more enjoyable. In addition to a fluid new gamepad-friendly control scheme that puts you in direct control of your hero, there's also support for four-person co-op in any combination of local and online players. The result is a more focused experience that really allows the underlying



game to sing. Whether you're a *Diablo III* vet or a newcomer looking to take down the Lord of Terror for the very first time, this console port is worth checking out.

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DIN'S PEARL AND THE SPIRIT OF THE SKIES DRAGON ROOST CAVERN (F2)



FIRST FLOOR

1. IS IT HOT IN HERE?



After entering Dragon Roost Cavern, you must find the entrance to the bulk of the dungeon. This entrance resides behind the three statues directly ahead. Pull the statue on the left forward, then pull the middle statue behind the leftmost statue. This will reveal a doorway leading to the room's main area.



Defeat the two Bokoblins in the center of the room and pick up one of their sticks. Take this to the torch just up the stairs and to the right of the locked door. Light the Deku Stick with the torch, then run to the room's west side. Light the two torches on top of the elevated platform to reveal a treasure chest containing a Small Key. Use the Small Key to unlock the locked door and head on through.

MAP LEGEND

A F To/From



Green Warp Pot



Small Key



Locked Door



Dungeon Map



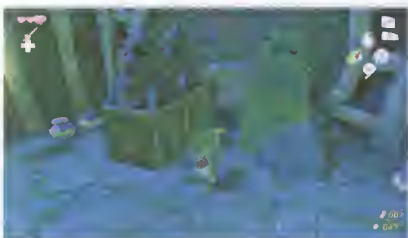
Chest #1
(Treasure Chart #39)



Big Key



DUNGEON EXPRESS



In this room is the Green Warp Pot. You'll find Warp Pots in every dungeon and can use them to transport you to any other Warp Pots in the dungeon. Now, don't be thinking that you can go anywhere at anytime—you have to find the Warp Pot and open it before you can use it—but it's an excellent way to get around a dungeon with minimal backtracking.

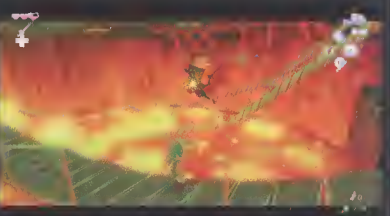


After entering the room, head down the hall and use your sword to destroy the boards blocking your path. Take a left and follow the wooden path that goes along the wall, passing the locked door. Hop over the small gap in the wooden path and continue until you reach another gap in the path.



Jump to the platform below the wooden path and pull the cube out of the wall on your left. Climb the cube and hop to the other side of the broken wooden path. Follow the wooden path to its end. To the right is another platform you can jump on and ahead is a suspension bridge. Cautiously jump to the other platform; a pillar of lava will shoot up periodically between where you are standing and the platform ahead. Cross the bridge and defeat any Keese that try to attack you.

ENEMY: KEESE



Keese are the batlike creatures that hang about a given room until you walk near them. Once angered, these aeronautical rodents will chase you until you get well away from them or until you defeat them. A single shot from anything will take out one of these brittle bats, but their airborne hijinks make them very difficult to hit without a ranged weapon. Wait for them to come in close, then strike.



At the end of the bridge are some Bomb Flowers. Pick up a piece of Bomb Flower fruit, hop to the other platform ahead, and throw the bomb at the boulder. Head through the door that was hidden behind the boulder.

2. FIREWALKER



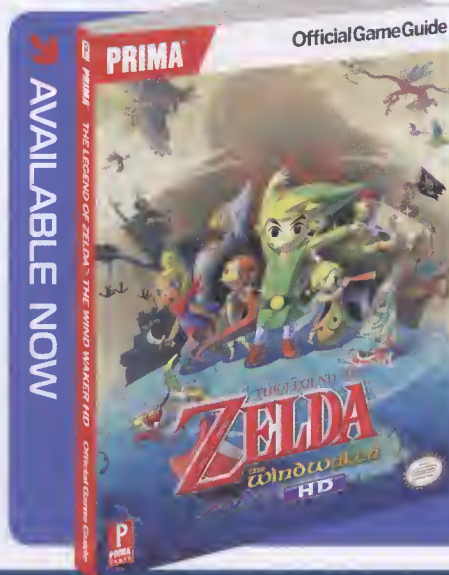
At first glance it seems this room is a dead end, given the pool of lava that separates you from the rest of the room. But the solution for dealing with meddling magma is the pots stationed around the room. Simply pick up one of the pots and throw it into the lava. The pots are filled with water and will create a platform of lava rock that is perfect for crossing the thermogenic pool.



Hot Foot!

The platforms you create with water from the pots will last only five seconds. Act fast or you're going to take a molten magma bath, which will send you straight back to the room's entrance.

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POKÉMON X & POKÉMON Y:

THE OFFICIAL KALOS REGION GUIDEBOOK

BROUGHT TO YOU BY POKÉMON

TOP FIVE WAYS OF EXPLORING POKÉMON X & POKÉMON Y

Take the first steps on your new Pokémon journey! Within the pages of *Pokémon X & Pokémon Y: The Official Kalos Region Guidebook*, you'll learn about the new adventures, new locations, new features, and new challenges of the *Pokémon X* and *Pokémon Y* games. It covers all five essential aspects of the game: exploring, collecting, training, trading, and battling!

1. EXPLORE THE KALOS REGION

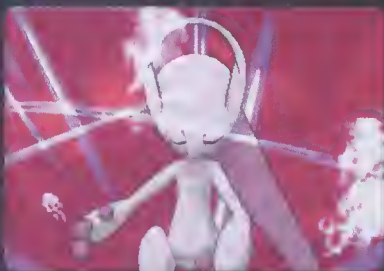


Begin your journey in Vaniville Town and explore the surrounding small towns, pristine rivers, mysterious trails, sun-dappled forests, and more! Meet new people and learn the secrets of the Kalos region on your journey to become the Pokémon Champion.

2. BEFRIEND AND CATCH NEW POKÉMON



Meet and catch dozens of new Pokémon from the Kalos region, so you can raise them to win exciting Pokémon battles! You'll start with fiery Fennekin, rumbling Chespin, or swift-swimming Froakie as your first Pokémon—but you'll meet many more. These new Pokémon have surprising new powers and abilities, and the *Official Kalos Region Guidebook* shows you where to go to improve your odds of catching them all!

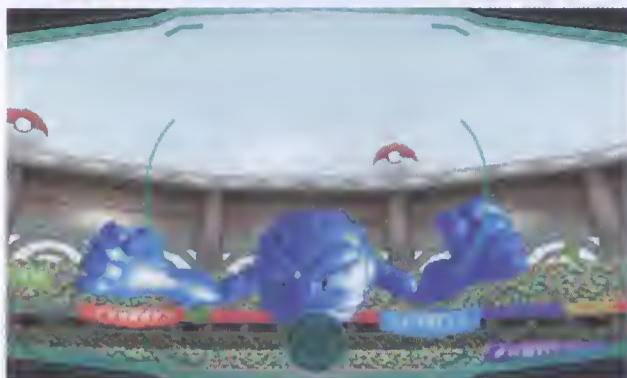


WHAT ARE MEGA-EVOLVED POKÉMON?

Mega-Evolved Pokémon are a new form of Pokémon discovered in the Kalos region—and Mega Evolution provides a powerful new way for Pokémon Trainers to win battles! The best Trainers will uncover the mystery of Mega Evolution, which only certain Pokémon can experience. So far, Pokémon revealed to have this potential include Abso!, Blastoise, Blaziken, Charizard, Lucario, Mawile, Mewtwo—and more! To make this powerful transformation happen, you must give these Pokémon the proper Mega Stone to hold. Find the Mega Ring to unlock the secrets of this new power!



3. TRAIN FOR BATTLE WITH SUPER TRAINING



Improve your Pokémon's base stats from the start of the game with the all-new Super Training. This is important for competitive players, because base stats can only be increased to a certain point. You can use two different modes, Core Training and Super-Training Regimens, to improve your Pokémon's base stats. In *Pokémon X* and *Pokémon Y*, you'll be able to raise your stats far more easily than ever before, thanks to Super Training.



4. BOND WITH YOUR POKÉMON WITH POKÉMON-AMIE



Pokémon-Amie is a unique Touch Screen mode that becomes available early in your adventure. Using this mode will make your Pokémon friendlier toward you through a variety of fun activities. Pet your Pokémon, play minigames together, and feed your favorite Pokémon delicious snacks. Besides bonding with your Pokémon, you'll gain numerous benefits in battle, as explained in the *Official Kalos Region Guidebook*.

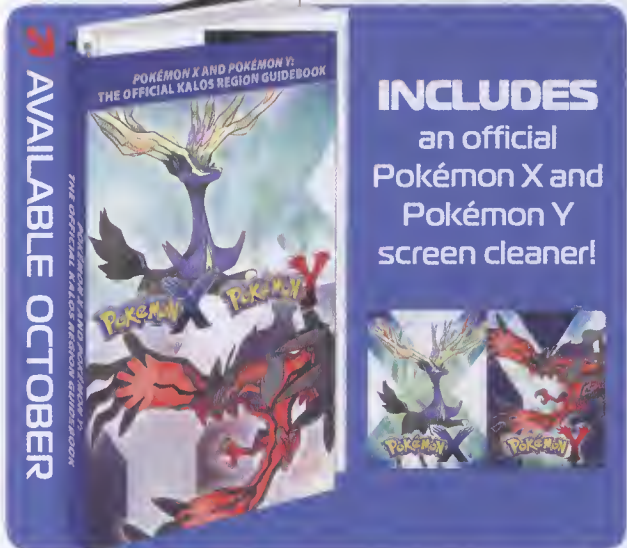
5. BATTLE AND TRADE WITH OTHER PLAYERS USING PSS



Connect with the world, as you trade, battle, and share O-Powers using the new Player Search System (PSS) feature. This multipurpose menu helps you interact with other *Pokémon X* and *Pokémon Y* players, whether they're playing nearby or in another part of the world.

These five aspects of the game only get you started in your exciting adventure—*Pokémon X & Pokémon Y: The Official Kalos Region Guidebook* provides a walkthrough of the game along with a wealth of details to give you an edge. See what other features are available and become an expert at top speed!

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PARTING SHOTS

ONE-ON-ONE WITH MICHEL ANCEL

CREATIVE DIRECTOR / RAYMAN LEGENDS

WGC: With *Rayman Legends*, it seems that you haven't rested on your laurels at all. You're still trying to find new and inventive ways to keep the platforming genre fresh. How, at this point in your career, do you keep finding ways to reinvent your games?

Michel Ancel: We always think that there are new things to do. And we can't wait to make them. So, for example, when we're working on something, we just try to imagine what would be surprising, different, and at the same time, familiar to people—something they could expect to play but have not played before. The funny thing is, the more we work, the more we discover new things that we can do. So, that's the thing that drives our passion.

WGC: One of the famous game-design stories is that Mario was created because of the hardware limitations—Shigeru Miyamoto had to give him a moustache instead of a mouth. I've heard that you made *Rayman* limbless because of technical limitations, too. Is that true?

MA: Yeah, technical limitations, plus the fact that moving the pieces of the body, like a puppet, for example—you can bring life. With a puppet, you have the joints, but because of technical limitations, I said to remove them because, at the time, it was impossible to have dynamic joints. But moving all the pieces independently gave the illusion of movement, and without the cost of drawing everything. So, it was a way to create a character with a special personality, with a special look. It's interesting—sometimes limitations and constraints can bring something new and different.

WGC: Do you find it more challenging now than it was back in the day to create *Rayman* on the PS1? Do you find it more difficult now because there are so many different nuances to each new generation of hardware? Or is it sort of a similar challenge?

MA: No, I think today, it's maybe easier to create content with the technology we have than it was with the pixels. Today, we can do whatever we want, in fact. We can have characters with arms and legs! The engine is handling those things by enabling deformations of the body and all those things, but it's crazy to see how much the power of the consoles enables us to make things easily.

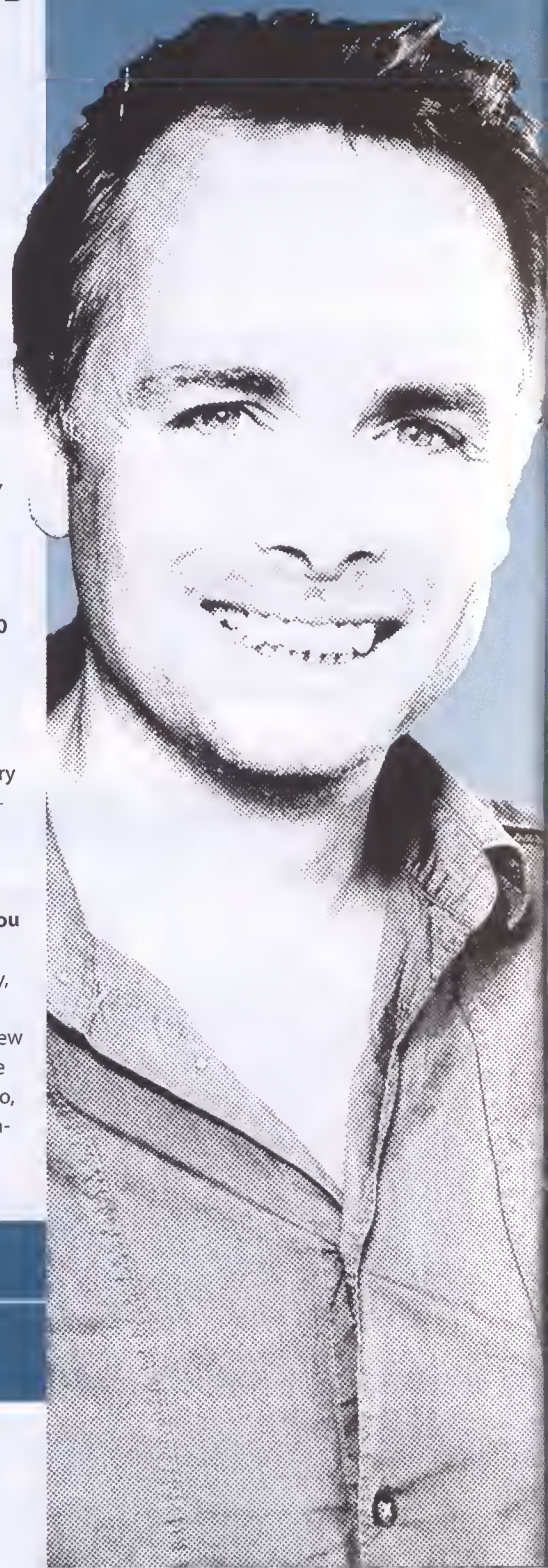
WGC: Why did you decide to include the Wii U touch-based levels in the PS3 and 360 versions of *Legends*?

MA: This decision was very important for us, especially with the fact that we know that the big fans from *Origins* have played on 360 and PS3, and we wanted the Wii U [levels] to be very true to these people. We reworked the [touch-based] levels, and we rebuilt the levels for the [360 and PS3] controls.

WGC: Besides *Rayman Legends*, what are you playing right now?

MA: I'm not really playing a lot of games today, but I'm really looking at games like *The Last of Us*—games that are pushing the industry in new directions. And the open-world games. Online games, too. I'm really looking for the future too, I would say, to continue bringing some innovations. **G**

It's not easy to make a splash in the videogame industry at the tender age of 23, but Michel Ancel did just that when he created his beloved platforming hero, Rayman, in 1995. With the superlative fifth game in the series, *Rayman Legends*, just released, we thought it was a great time to chat with Ancel about where Rayman's been—and where the limbless wonder is going from here.



VITAL SIGNS

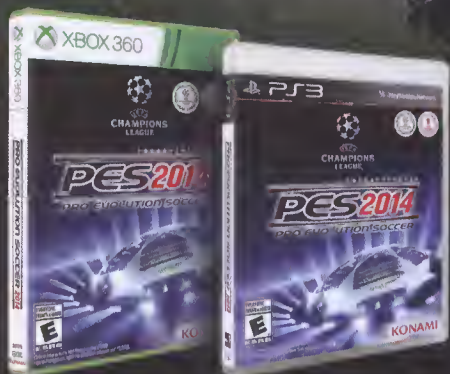
OCCUPATION GAME DESIGNER

GAME HIGHLIGHTS RAYMAN, RAYMAN 2: THE GREAT ESCAPE, BEYOND GOOD & EVIL, RAYMAN ORIGINS



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